municipal grant from the State was reduced from Rs. 43,020 in 1096 to Rs 29,250 in 1097, and to Rs. 28,650 in 1098, the Councils being thereby required to depend upon their own resources to a greater extent than before, for which the new Regulation affords ample possibilities. The income of every Council is susceptible of steady improvement, especially under non-tax heads, but Government have so far received only two proposals for the development of such income. Sanction has already been accorded to a sum of Rs. 10,000 being lent to the Quilon Municipal Council for purchasing the Chinnakkadai market, while the grant of a loan of about Rs. 33,000 to the Shencottah Municipal Council for the reclamation of the Perumalkulam tank and the wet *ayakut* thereunder and their conversion into building sites is under the consideration of Government. Arrangements are in progress for handing over the minor roads within the municipal limits of the towns of Nagercoil and Alleppey to the control of the respective Municipalities, on the understanding that 50 per cent. of the cost of their maintenance would be borne by the Government for a period of five years from 1099. The Government would be glad to hand over the minor roads within the limits of the remaining municipal towns also to the respective Councils in the event of their being prepared to accept them on similar conditions. The powers of Municipal Presidents in the matter of appointment, etc., of municipal subordinates, have been substantially increased. The short period during which the Municipal Regulation, V of 1095, has been in force has revealed a number of defects in its working which require removal, and the Additional Head Sirkar Vakil has withheld a Bill to introduce a few minor changes in that Regulation, with a view to place before the Legislative Council a Bill embodying a more comprehensive revision of the same. Regulation VI of 1097, sanctioning the formation of Benches of Honorary Magistrates, has been brought into force with effect from the 1st Dhanu, 1098, and four First Class Benches within the municipal towns of Nagercoil, Trivandrum, Quilon and Alleppey, and four Second Class Benches within those of Kayankulam, Tiruvalla, Changanachery and Kottayam, respectively, have been established. These Honorary Magistrates' Courts have been opened primarily with a view to give non-official gentlemen a further share in the administration of justice. Incidentally they will also afford relief to some stipendiary Magistrates. With a view to install and foster local self-government in rural areas, a Bill for the formation of Village Panchayats will be introduced at the next meeting of the Legislative Council. This Bill, as you are aware, has already been published in the Gazette. Under it a Village Panchayat will consist of not more than eleven and not less than five members, of whom not less than two-thirds will be elected. Several obligatory and discretionary duties are proposed to be vested in these bodies, among the former of which may be mentioned the opening and maintenance of communications, the conservancy of streets, the supply of drinking water, the control of cattle pounds and the enforcement of sanitation and vaccination, and among the latter, primary education, street lighting, the planting of avenue trees, the improvement of agriculture and the promotion of cottage industries. It is also proposed to invest these Panchayats with certain elementary civil and criminal powers.

48. **Legislative Council.**—The new Legislative Council, constituted under Regulation II of 1097, has already held two meetings, and its third meeting comes off on the 10th April, 1923. The total number of electors on the register was 96,316, forming about 2·5 per cent. of the total population of the State. A large number of the electors polled in every constituency, as will be seen from the fact that the percentage was as high as 85 in Chengannur *cum* Pattanamtitta, while even in the hilly and backward constituency of Peermade *cum* Devicolam it did not fall below 40·9. This is a fitting tribute to the high literacy and advanced political consciousness of the people of Travancore, especially when we remember that the highest percentage of voters who participated in the elections in British India under the Reform Act was only 70—in some of the urban constituencies of the Madras Presidency—while the average proportions of voting for the Provincial Councils only ranged between 20 and 30 per cent., and in Burma, the only Province in India with about the same level of literacy as Travancore, the proportion was even less than 10 per cent., as against 64·4 here. The State budget for 1098 M. E. was discussed at the first meeting of the Council and voted upon,

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reductions being effected to the extent of Rs. 65,336. Supplementary grants to the extent of Rs. 20,720 were passed by the Council at its second meeting. Eleven resolutions on matters of general public interest were altogether discussed by the Council, of which one was carried and eight were withdrawn, while the remaining two were put to the vote and lost. While the Government thankfully acknowledge the high sense of responsibility and fairness displayed by the non-official members, they have no doubt that the non-official members would, in their turn, admit that the official members have honestly tried to understand the non-official view-point. In the apt words of Sir Harcourt Butler, the new constitution has "brought the administrative machine more effectively than ever before under the impact of public opinion". With a view to give the non-official side of the House an insight into the methods of official work and to secure closer co-operation between it and the official side, a Standing Finance Committee, consisting of three nominated officials and three non-official members elected by the Council, with the President of the Council as the President thereof, has been just constituted. This committee will examine the draft annual budget so far as the same is within the cognisance of the Council, all applications for supplementary grants, under votable items of expenditure, and such other matters as may be referred to it by Government. Over and above this, Government have sanctioned the appointment of as many as 5 special committees of the Council to examine the revised Rules for the constitution and conduct of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly, the working of the Government Press, the provision of accommodation in His Highness the Maha Raja's College, the distribution of educational scholarships, and the Rules regulating the grant of passes for the removal of timber from private lands, respectively.

49. **Devaswoms.**—I have already referred to the constitution of a separate department for the administration of Devaswoms. A separate Devaswom fund, composed mainly of a sum representing 40 per cent. of the recurring land revenue of the State, has been created, and miscellaneous items of receipts, such as offerings, will also go to the credit of this fund. The Devaswom Commissioner is the adviser to Government in all matters relating to Devaswom administration and he is responsible for the administration not only of Devaswoms, but also of *Japadakshina* and charitable institutions with the exception of the *Agrasala*. Sirkar Devaswoms have now been divided into three classes, major, involving an expenditure of Rs. 1,000 or more, minor, costing between Rs. 100 and Rs. 1,000, and petty, costing less than Rs. 100, annually. Rules are being drafted for the association of private gentlemen with the management of minor and petty Devaswoms. The principles on which the restoration of Devaswoms should be taken up have been laid down, under which such works will be attended to in the order of their urgency and importance. In regard to minor Devaswoms, the co-operation of the people of the locality will be sought and preference given to the restoration of those in regard to which a contribution of not less than 50 per cent. of the total estimated outlay is undertaken by those interested. Such works will be entrusted, as far as possible, to the leading men of the locality for execution. A special officer has been appointed for the verification of *tiruvâbharanams* in all the important Devaswoms. A new set of account rules relating to the administration of these institutions have also been brought into force from the 1st Makaram, 1098, the main advantages of which are that large sums of money will not be drawn in cash by the subordinate officers of the department and that promptitude will be enforced in the submission of accounts. The great importance of this long-looked-for measure to certain sections of His Highness the Maha Raja's subjects was referred to by me in my last year's Address. It has placed the holders of Sirkar Devaswomvaka lands in a position of perfect security and perfect equality with the holders of Pandaravaka lands, and it has removed the last trace of inequality in the matter of the appointment of all classes of His Highness the Maha Raja's subjects to all departments of the State civil service, with the exception, of course, of the Devaswom Department. It has freed land revenue officers of the heavy extraneous duty of administering Sirkar Devaswoms and has made it possible for them to pay greater attention to, and to perform more efficiently, their legitimate revenue work. It has also enabled the Government to effect a reduction in the

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